People who did not know the Bertrams wondered how it were possible for so many children to live in so small a house. When Dr. Bertram built the house it was considered of very good size, but that was many years ago, and since then five bright, happy children had come to crowd the little brown house. On one side of them lived a little boy who was an only child and the idol of his father and mother. He had the enviable reputation of having everything he wanted. When some of the little Bertrams wished they were as fortunate as Lawrence Cole, their sister Helen, who was 14, would say:

"Oh, it wouldn't be nice to have all the things we want—there wouldn't be anything to wish for, and wishing is such fun!"

Of their neighbor on the other side the children stood in great awe. He was a bachelor named Samuel Jorden, who lived all alone, and who detested children; and how in the world he happened to build a house right next to the little brown house full of them is not known.

But, in spite of all the wealth on either side of them, the Bertrams were the happiest, most contented of families. There was always such fun there, with never a dull day, so that every child in the neighborhood loved to go there, but after dinner at night was the jolliest time, when Dr. Bertram was at home. They would all gather around the open fire in the library and everyone had to tell what he and she had been doing all day. Then they would have a little music from Helen and her mother, and the girl would transfer them all to an ideal world with the music from her violin. Then came the procession to bed, where Marjorie would be carried, half asleep. The queer thing about the Bertram family was that everyone was utterly different in look and character, so that one never knew just which one they loved best.

It was only the third day before Christmas, when Dorothy, who was just "half past six," went up stairs to find her mother. She had a wistful look on her little face that one could never resist.

"Mother, dear, have I got something for everybody now?"

"Yes, Dorothy, I think you have, and you have helped me very much, besides," answered her mother.

"Well, then, would you please give me just fifteen cents more and let me go out all alone and spend it?"

"Why, yes, my child, you may have that. I suppose it is some great mystery, isn't it, and I mustn't ask?" said Mrs. Bertram.

"No, please don't ask—ever!" said the child earnestly.

"Ever!" thought her mother, as the child went out, "what can she be going to do with it?

It was almost dark when Dorothy opened the door of a florist's little shop, two blocks down the street. Never was a child who loved flowers more than this little maid, and she would talk to them as she would to her dolls. She was a frequent visitor at this shop, and when the other children hurried off to a candy store with an occasional five cents, she usually spent

"I WANT ALL YOU CAN GIVE ME."

hers for a few pretty flowers. So as she stood there hesitatingly, the man smiled and asked her what she wished.

"I want all you can give me of some kind that smells sweet, for fifteen cents. I suppose the flowers are all very dear, aren't they?" she added dubiously, but the man had disappeared inside the glass closet, and when he brought out a lovely bunch of Dorothy's favorite cinnamon pinks, she fairly danced. He was very generous with his little customer and gave her eight blossoms, sweet and fresh.

It was quite dark when Dorothy arrived home, but she went straight on past her door, and, wonder of wonders! she turned in at the gate of Mr. Jorden's house!

"Please might I see Mr. Jorden for a minute?" she asked the astonished maid who opened the door just wide enough to look out.

"Well, I never! you don't know how he hates children, I guess," she said, opening the door wider.

A big lump, which she tried to swallow, came up in Dorothy's throat.

"Yes, I do, but may I just see him a minute? I won't bother him."

"Well, I don't know what he'll say, I'm sure," said the girl, as she led the way through the beautiful hall to a door at which she knocked.

"Here, sir, is one of them children that lives next door. She's got some message, I guess."

And in one second Dorothy found the door shut behind her, and there, in the chair before the fire, sat Mr. Jorden.

"Well, what is it you want, little girl?" said he as he turned toward her. "Be quick, for I am very busy."

"Oh, are you busy?" asked Dorothy, surprised, because he was not doing anything but looking at the fire. "I—I only wanted to give you these, sir, and I'll go right away.

The man stared hard at the white paper parcel she held out to him.

"Flowers?" said he.

"Yes."

"For what, may I ask?"

"Just for Christmas, because you live all alone. Good-bye," and she was gone.

The pretty flowers had begun to fade by the warm fire before Mr. Jorden came out of the brown study into which he had fallen.

"God bless her brave little heart," said he, as he held Dorothy's flowers.

* * * * *

The first joy of the Christmas tree was over, the presents were all distributed, and every one of the little Bertrams were sitting around admir-

"FLOWERS?" HE SAID.

ing the candles and the clever trimming of the tree.

"There goes the door bell again," said someone.

"Do you think Santa Claus has come back?" asked Marjorie.

It was a great disappointment to her when she saw her mother shaking hands with Mr. Jorden. He looked rather sad, though he smiled at them all. There was a bright carnation in his buttonhole, the sight of which made Dorothy want to get behind someone.

"How happy you look," said the visitor, sitting down. "I could see you through my side windows—I have often looked in upon you, and tonight I took the liberty of joining you for half an hour. Shall I intrude?"

"Not at all," said Dr. Bertram. "You are very welcome."

Mr. Jorden drew Dorothy toward him and kissed her.

"Do you know," he said, turning to look at them all, "that a man may grow to be fifty years old and learn for the first time what he should always have known. It is this little girl who has taught me how sweet and comforting a child may be, and I used to think they were put into the world only to annoy people."

This was Mr. Jorden's conversion, and though all the children grew to love him, it was Dorothy who became his daily companion and friend.

Christmas Waits.

In England the "waits" are musicians who play throughout the towns and cities at night, for two or three weeks preceding Christmas. They call on the inhabitants for donations. At one time it was the custom to let out this privilege to one man, who was privileged to hire as many waits as he chose and to take a goodly percentage of the profits, none others but his players being allowed to engage in this occupation.

She Knew.

"What are pauses?" the teacher asked the first class in grammar.

"Things that grows on cats and dogs," answered the smallest girl.

Do not dare to live without some clear intention toward which your living shall be bent. Mean to be something with all your might.—Phillips Brooks.

Cast Care to the Winds.

Holly berries red and bright,
Wealth of candles flick'ring light,
Christmas in the air!
Childish faces all aglow,
Outside sleigh bells in the snow—
Banished is dull care.

Older wiseheads for the time
Join in sport and song and rhyme—
Happy Chrismastide!
Mem'ry brings back golden youth,
Eyes then seeing only youth,
Ever at its side.

Joy tonight is crowned the queen
Of the festive Christmas scene.
May her rule be long!
None can claim a rebel heart
With her foll'wers forms a part—
Theirs a gladsome song!

A Bit of Deception.

She stood beneath no chandelier
Entwined with mistletoe;
I glanced the hall-length far and near,
I looked both high and low;
No license for a kiss was hung,
'Twas near a failure flat,
When lo, I spied a sprig among
The feathers on her hat.

Roy Farrell Greene.

Old Santy is no phantom prim—
The cheer he brings cures many ills;
Thro' dreamland's door we follow him,
And lose the thought of New Year's bills.

Old English Customs.

It was customary in former days, in Cornwall, England, for the people to meet on Christmas eve at the bottom of the deepest mines and have a midnight mass.

In some parts of Derbyshire the village choir assemble in the church on Christmas eve and there wait until midnight, when they proceed from house to house, invariably accompanied by a keg of ale, singing "Christians, Awake!" During the week they again visit the principal houses in the place, and having played and sang for the evening, and partaken of the Christmas cheer, are presented with a sum of money.

In Chester and its neighborhood numerous singers parade the streets, and are hospitably entertained with meat and drink at the various houses where they call.

The "ashton fagot" is burned in Devonshire. It is composed entirely of ash timber, the separate branches bound with ash bands and made as large as can be admitted to the floor of the fireplace. When the fagot blazes a quart of cider is called for and served upon the bursting of every hoop or band around the fagot. The timber being green and elastic, each band bursts with a loud report.

In one or two localities it is still customary for the farmer, with his family and friends, after partaking together of hot cakes and cider (the cakes being dipped into the liquor previous to being eaten) to proceed to the orchard, one or the party bearing hot cake and cider as an offering to the principal apple tree. The cake is formally deposited on the fork of the tree and the cider thrown upon the cake and tree.

A superstitious notion prevails in the western parts of Devonshire that at 12 o'clock at night on Christmas eve the oxen in their stalls are always found on their knees as in an attitude of devotion.

One John Martyn, by will, on Nov. 28, 1729, gave to the church wardens and overseers of the poor of the parish, St. Mary Major, Exeter, £20, to be put out at interest, and the profits thereof to be laid out every Christmas eve in twenty pieces of beef, to be distributed to twenty of the poorest people in the parish, said charity to be continued forever.

Santa Will Stay.

There are a lot of people
Who love to wag their jaws
And tell the children plainly
There is no Santa Claus.

No Santa Claus—what nonsense
Down childish throats to ram,
You might as well inform them
There is no Uncle Sam!

R. K. Munkittrick.

The roll of the reveille drums and the trumpet's brazen falsetto did not serve in the least to disturb the morose meditations of Private Patrick Francis Tiernan, Seventh United States cavalry, who was walking post at Fort Runyon, Mont., in the gray of that Christmas day morning in the year 1890. Private Patrick Francis Tiernan, Troop K, until day before yesterday a sergeant of twenty-seven years standing, was now walking post like the veriest "rookie" in the Fort Runyon outfit, reduce to the ranks by the finding of a court martial for drunkenness, and that court martial convened by the order of his colonel. And the colonel, the man with whom

IN THE HOLLOW IN THE BANK HE SAW THREE FORMS.

Tiernan had soldiered all through the years that the officer was rising step by step from the ranks of a subaltern of horse to that of the command of the crack cavalry regiment of the service.

After the new guard had been mounted that morning Private Tiernan made his way to his quarters and without a word to his fellows, left the barracks and headed for the stables. As he passed the door of the commissary the Colonel came out and met him face to face. Tiernan's hand went to his cap in rigid salute.

"Good morning, Sargeant," said Colonel Blake. The old title slipped out naturally.

"Private Tiernan, sir, now," was the answer in a tone that implied it

PRIVATE PATRICK FRANCIS TIERNAN.

would be a pleasure to add, "Thanks to you."

"As you will, Tiernan; where are you going?"

"I'm an old guard post; I've walked post all night and I'm going to ride over to Miles City, sir."

"Are you going to drink today, sergeant?"—the title again.

"Private, sir; I don't know; there's not many that care."

"Tiernan, we've soldiered in the same command for nearly thirty years. Yours was a growing fault. A deep interest and a liking sometimes moves a man to do a disagreeable duty. Enough of this, however. I want you to promise me that you won't drink today. Get out of the mud, Tiernan; get out of the mud. Promise me you'll not drink."

"What's my word worth? I'm not an officer and a gentleman."

"It does not always need a strap on the shoulder to make a gentleman, Tiernan. I've known the chevron and the plain sleeve to do the trick as well. Promise me."

The answer came half sulkily: "Well, if you want me to promise, I will." Then the trooper turned and strode away to the stables, taking no notice of the hand which he knew instinctively was held out to grasp his.

At the stables he threw a saddle on to Joe Hooker, and with a more vicious dig from the spur than the horse had ever before felt from that heel set out at a "charge" pace across the prairie. Miles City came in sight. Tiernan rode past the scattered outlying shacks, and reaching the heart of the place made straight for the bar of the "Jolly Trooper." He called for brandy, filled the glass, raised it, and then as if mirrored in its contents he read the words: "I've known the chevron and the plain sleeve to do the trick as well." Tiernan put the liquor back on the bar, paid for it, and turned for the door. Then the thought of the gibes of the recruits came into his mind like a knife. He turned to the bar again, touched the glass, dropped it and then said sharply: "Give me a bottle of brandy." He took the flask outside and put it in his saddle bag. Thus far he had kept the letter of his word.

Tiernan headed Joe Hooker for the railroad station. The wind was soughing along in a way which the experienced trooper knew presaged a blizzard. At the station platform Tiernan found the post ambulance. The driver said that he had been sent over to meet Colonel Blake's sister, Mrs. Carruthers, her son and the Colonel's daughter, Miss Molly Blake.

"They arrived," said the driver in response to Tiernan's question, "on an earlier train than was expected and left for the post in an open wagon before I arrived. Mrs. Carruther's son, who came with her, hired the team, said he knew the way, and would drive the party over. They've had half an hour the start, and if they keep to the new road they can make the post before this blizzard is strong enough to hurt them. It's too late now for me to put back, however, and I'm going to stay here."

Tiernan looked at the sky. The clouds had banked up thickly, and the snow was coming faster and faster, blown by a constantly rising wind. "The last time young Carruthers was at the post," he thought, "the old road was in use." He does not know of the short new one. If he takes the old trail round the bluff they're lost." Then he thought of Molly, whom ten years ago in the far-off Apache country, he had taught to ride. Molly, for whom he had been bodyguard all through her childhood. Without a word to a soul he mounted and struck off into the very teeth of the storm. "Don't fail me this day, Joe Hooker," he said.

The horse, as if in answer, galloped steadily forward. The air seemed turned to ice, yet the wind kept ever rising. They came at last to the parting of the old and the new roads. Tiernan slipped from his horse, and at a part of the now disused trail, sheltered slightly by an embankment, he found the fresh marks of a wheel. Carruthers had taken the old roundabout road. The blizzard was at its height. Tiernan blinded his horse and bending low over the saddle kept him to his task with encouraging words. For an hour they kept steadily on in the face of the tempest. To any others than that plains-tried soldier and steed the blizzard would have meant death. He had hoped to overtake those whom he sought in time to take them back to the new path. The hope was given over long since. Suddenly Joe Hooker stopped. There was an obstruction on the trail. Tiernan slid from the saddle, his limbs already stiffened with the cold, and with one hand on his steed's bridle he led the way gropingly for a few steps. There he found an open carriage empty and with two horses overcome in the trail. Tiernan's heart nearly failed him. He knew he was almost on the point where the trail rounded the bluff. Perhaps the carriage occupants had sought shelter under the lee of the embankment. Toward it he made his painful way. A cry came faintly to his ear above the howling of the storm. He stumbled on with his left hand still grasping tightly Joe Hooker's bridle. In another moment the steep embankment shut out some of the fury of the wind and the driving needlelike snow ceased for a moment to blind his vision. Before him in a hollow of the bank he saw three forms. Two were prostrate, the other was kneeling, and the soldier realized that the white face of young Carruthers was turned toward him, while from the lips came the smothered cry, "Sergeant Tiernan."

Tiernan stumbled forward and sank down beside the motionless figures, half covered with snow.

"Save them," came in anguished tones from the boy. Tiernan raised the nearest form and looked into the face of Molly Blake. Exposure had well-nigh done its work. Then a thought flashed into his mind, and with an action as quick as the thought he sprang to the side of his horse and thrust his hand into the saddle bag. There was the bottle of brandy intact. In a trice a quantity of the stimulant was forced between the lips of the storm's victims and signs of returning consciousness were almost immediate. Tiernan used his saddle blanket and overcoat as a further protection and soon succeeded in getting the three into a still more sheltered nook. After long waiting the storm subsided, and then came the thump of hoof falls. A minute later a troop of cavalry, led by Colonel Blake, broke round the edge of the bluff. The Colonel slipped from his horse and took his daughter into his arms. The troopers started a fire, and when its genial warmth had made itself felt the story was told in a few words.

"Sergeant Tiernan," said Colonel Blake, "that bottle of brandy saved three lives."

"Maybe," returned Tiernan, but you may thank what you said this morning for there being a drop in it."

Patrick Francis Tiernan, retired first sergeant K troop, Seventh cavalry, wears a massive gold watch. Inscribed on the inside of one case are these words: "From Molly Blake to Sergeant Tiernan, Non-Commissioned Officer and Gentleman." Within the back case Sergeant Tiernan had engraved these: "I've known the chevron or the plain sleeve to do the trick as well. Christmas Day, 1890."

The Christmas Tree.

Says an enthusiastic mother: "I don't believe there is anything on the face of the earth that gives more pleasure to the average child than a Christmas tree. It does make a good deal of trouble for the elders, but surely it is worth while! One is only a child such a little while, and one is grown up so very long! We grown up people are very well satisfied to have our yearly presents just given to us, but surely we all can remember how the value of the gifts once increased in proportion to the way they were given. Was anything more delightful than emptying a stocking, especially when each thing was wrapped up and tied. The presents were so much more desirable that way than if they had just been laid out on a chair or table. And if they came on a Christmas tree, words cannot express how much that enhanced their value. Surely that childish delight repaid all the hard work that fell to the elders' share, and the remembrance of it now goes a long way to lighten the work of it all for our own small boys and girls.

"A big tree is glorious, but, after all, the Christmas we always looked back on as the very best was the one where we each had a little tree of our own. They were from about six inches high, for the baby, up to three feet for father. They were planted in lovely pots, and were decorated with little bits of candles and cornucopias, on each tree a different color. There was even one tree for the pets, and no single one was forgotten. Every dog, cat, rabbit, guinea pig, or doll had a gift, with its own name marked on the outside. Truly that was a Christmas! I only wish I had the nine little rascals to make all the happiness for, and the means to do it. Children are endless trouble; but how forlorn it is not to have them to trouble for!"

Her Christmas Greeting.

It's Christmas, and she sends to me
A neat and pretty card;
But as I read my face grows long—
It must be quite a yard.

'Tis not because its worth is slight
That I am filled with woe;
It is an invitation to
Her wedding, don't you know?

When a man is down his enemies stop kicking him and his friends begin.